

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

MRK-A-

27934

Chief, Communications
Chief, FDM
COS, Karlsruhe

29 March 1951

Operational
Staybehind Activation

DOCUMENT NO. _____
NO CHANGES IN CLASS _____
IN _____
CLASSIFICATION TO: TS S G
DATE: 27 MAY 1951
BY: _____
REVIEWER: 011922

1. It is requested that guidance be given in the matter of "how" and "when" staybehind signal plans are to be activated. While the answer to "when" is ~~was~~ primarily a non-commo decision, the "when" factor appears to be inseparably linked with the "how" factor.

2. We can say to an agent "activate your plan immediately after the outbreak of war"—or any other date or time (in an event or calendar sense). We could asterisk "activation" scheduled contacts or cover the full plan. We could key activation to some type of broadcast—BBC or our own—CW or 'phone. We might even use letter drops. In whatever the case, it can be appreciated that the element of "when" is tied into the element "how". If we leave activation on the basis of "do nothing until you hear your activation signal on such-and-such broadcast" we are leaving a great deal to hope and trust in the "when" sense. Some people are staunch believers in not activating agents for many months after a war begins. The Russians are notorious for negating the democratic use of receivers. Thus, we, under a condition of long range activation—the date/time of which is indefinite—force our agent to dig up his burial or otherwise surreptitiously operate a receiver in order to listen for his activation signal. He is thereby exposed to what may well be a prolonged physical security risk. The agent's faith will fall off proportionate to the delay in transmitting an activation signal. The multiple facets of this problem deserve great attention and thought. Perhaps, in summation, the problem resolves itself into the following steps:

A. Coordinate with all concerned and determine at least an approximate activation time in each case.

B. Instruct the individual agent to commence listening for base's activation signal and/or instructions at said approximate time. (It is to be pointed out that some agents could conceivably be activated by non-electrical means—letter drops, courier contact, etc.) or

B.1. To activate the plan specifically on such and such a date.

SECRET

SECRET


C. Keep initial scheduled contacts on an asterisked basis in order to conserve our too few base assets.

Many of our staybehinds will not bear fruit regardless of the "how" or "when". I feel we are ill-advised to cover all staybehind plans on the "full" basis. Also, the greater the basic security of the individual plans, the more the personnel and equipment at base is required.

3. Subparagraph 2C above deserves amplification. We believe it is safe to estimate that a sizeable percentage (40-60) of a diversified group of stay-behind W/T links will abort in the prenatal state. If such a percentage is accepted as a possibility, we would be wasting a large amount of personnel and equipment time at base to barren signal plans should we meet every plan on a "full" basis. Also, meeting every plan on a "full" basis day in and day out may lessen plan and procedure security, aid in "blowing" base frequencies, and indicate the quantity of plans left behind.

4. It is very difficult to determine the hours which might be available to a staybehind operator before the staybehind condition actually arises. For planning purposes, I believe, it is better to vary hours, days and dates so that, at some time, at least, the agent will be free to operate. Corrections, amendments, etc., can be made for the benefit of agents who do activate after such activation.

5. We would appreciate your reactions and guidance.

Dist: 2 - C, Commo
1 - FDM
1 - 
1 - COS
1 - File

SECRET

52-6-2-3875